

**The Flowering of *Xanthorrhoea preissii*.**—One reason for purchasing our block at Wembley Downs, where we have lived since 1958, was the existing flora—including some two dozen 'black-boys.' We retained most of these and I decided to keep a record of the flowering of all of them in the backyard. During the period 1958-1968 none of the five plants in the front garden flowered. Most of the plants listed in the table are mature with caudex ranging from about 0.3 m. to about 1.0 m. The numbers in the annual columns indicate the number of spikes on each plant.

Number of Plant	YEAR											
	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	
1	1				1		2					
2				1		1	3					removed in 1968
3	nil											
4	nil											
5	nil											
6				2			3				1	
7	nil until removal in 1964											
8	nil											
9				1						died, 1966		
10								1				
11 to 16	nil											

The sample is too small to draw any firm conclusions other than to state that flowering appears to be infrequent and irregular. It is of interest that Plants 1, 2, 6 and 7 are (or were) in the middle of a lawn. No. 9 was near the same lawn. These plants would have received more water in the summer time. It is possible that the heavier flowering of these plants may be due to this watering. No. 6 developed what appeared to be dry-rot in one of its heads. This head was chopped away and the rest of the plant remains healthy. It appears advisable to use a sprinkler that does not water the heads of black-boys during the summer-time. Since I have been careful to avoid dampening the tops of the plants no sign of dieback has appeared. It may also be significant that plants numbered 1, 2 and 6 have developed a number of heads—up to 6. Only one or two of the remaining plants have developed more than one head. This may also be caused by summer watering. Plants 3 and 4 are very handsome, symmetrical specimens as they are more isolated.

I observed that Twenty-eight Parrots in particular feed on the seeds. In one season a convenient elbow in one of the spikes formed a summer-long perch for a Boobook Owl. From our sitting room, through the large window we could observe the owl hawking for moths from this perch in the twilight.

Because of the small size of the sample I did not attempt to correlate the flowering record with climatic observations. It would be interesting to know, from any other records, whether conditions in 1961 and 1964 may have favoured flowering. It is possible that the heavy flowering recorded in these two years for this sample is not significant.

It is interesting to note that E. Brownfield published a note on the flowering *Xanthorrhoea gracilis* in the *W.A. Naturalist*, vol. 1, no. 1. He observed an interval of two to three years between flowering of individual plants. No plant observed by him had flowered in successive years. In my record one plant (No. 2) flowered in 1963 and 1964. Unfortunately I cannot say for certain whether flowers were produced by the same head in these two years.

—DAVID HUTCHISON, Wembley Downs.